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Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

Vol. VIII.—No. 36. BOSTON, MASS., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1892. Whole No. 218.

"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

Rev. Edward E. Hale writes on lotteries in his department in the "Cosmopolitan" this month. That he urges the total suppression of lotteries goes without the saying; but he certainly advances a remarkably original argument in support of his position. The lotteries, he triumphantly cries, must be suppressed, because, eternal vigilance is the price of *liberty!*

Kentucky's new constitution forbids the acceptance of free railroad passes by legislators. Of course this constitutional prohibition is never violated. The legislators cannot and do not accept passes for themselves, but they have them made out for members of their families. To the railroad companies the arrangement is perfectly satisfactory, which fact is very well understood by the people. But the law, at any rate, is obeyed.

"Unity" dissents from the opinion that scientific research cannot satisfy the hope for the "soul's" continued existence after death. Those who hold this view, says "Unity," use the word scientific in too narrow a sense, limiting it to mere technical knowledge, the truth being that the "word includes the entire field of human consciousness, the hopes and aspirations of the race as well as its more practical gains." "Unity's" definition of the word scientific is peculiar; but, without quarrelling with the absurd definition, it is surely pertinent to ask whether the hopes and aspirations of the orthodox Christians and Jews and Mohammedans are likewise included. Is the belief in a personal God and in the orthodox hell scientific? If not, why not? Since the aspirations and hopes of the race are "included," no arbitrary distinctions can be allowed. One's man "hope" is as good as another's.

Boston has an anti-tenement-house league which seeks to abolish the "sweating system." It has petitioned Congress for legislation against sweaters, and demands the passage of a State law prohibiting tenement-house workshops. This league recently held a "genuine mass meeting," over which Governor Russell presided. The newspaper report mentions a curious and novel feature of the meeting. "As the Governor introduced Rev. Louis A. Banks, an old gentleman rose in the audience and said that such a meeting should be held in God's name, and asked that it be opened with prayer. Governor Russell, therefore, asked Mr. Banks to pray, and that gentleman led the audience in repeating the Lord's prayer." The old gentleman's motion was certainly in order. The prayers addressed to legislators are just as efficacious as those addressed to God, and invidious distinctions are not to be countenanced. Since workmen will pray, they should not forget the original claimant. But, seriously, is prayer to be a necessary feature of Boston labor mass meetings hereafter?

The "Journal of the Knights of Labor" reproduces Liberty's comment on the failure of the Chicago municipal authorities to check the "high buildings evil" and the coincident solution of the problem by a private insurance company's decision to put prohibitory insurance rate on high buildings, and appends the following remarks: "All of which goes to show that, as we have often contended, the opposition of Anarchists to government is rather to the name than the thing itself. Liberty stoutly objects to being governed by any of the institutions now recognized as governments, but is very willing that a combination of capitalists acting in their own interests should step in and practically do the work that municipal government has left undone. If its dream could be realized, it would simply mean that the plutocracy would rule directly and regulate everything to suit themselves, instead of as now, ruling in some matters in an indirect way under the forms of representative government, which somewhat mitigate their despotism. But in the absence of government they would have everything in their hands." The "Journal," to begin with, begs the question in asserting that in the absence of government the plutocrats would have everything in their hands. We maintain that it is government which gives them their power to impose inequitable conditions upon the workmen and small business men. In the absence of the legally-created privileges which protect the plutocrats from the influences of competition, plutocracy, we hold, could do nothing. This point cannot be argued here, but it should be borne in mind by the critics who are fond of charging that Anarchists would substitute the direct rule of the plutocracy for the indirect rule of the same. In the second place, the "Journal" does not understand what despotism and government mean. When the insurance companies put a prohibitive rate on certain property, they exercise no tyranny whatever. They are not obliged to insure people's property; they are in the business for their own advantage, and they are not expected to make any sacrifices. Insurance companies fix their rates, and the people are at liberty to withhold their patronage from those that fix them too high. The insurance business is not a monopoly, and the people are free to organize a system of mutual insurance if they deem it well to do so. To govern or tyrannize is to say "thou shalt" or "shalt not" do this or that, when equal liberty does not warrant the injunction. To say to a person that he cannot have certain benefits to which he is not entitled unless he complies with certain conditions, is not to govern. The insurance companies do not govern, any more than the "Journal" governs when it says that persons wishing to get it from the office must pay a certain sum for the privilege.

For Genuine Free Trade.

Dear Mr. Tucker:

In England we rejoice at the way in which you fight the battle of freedom, and as we read you we feel that we are one people and that it was only our government that separated us and our [illegible]ments that keep us separate, and that we only need [illegible]stablish perfect freedom of trade—that is, of the exchange of commodities, services, and intercourse—to form one [illegible]iety again. The first step in that direction is freedom in trade. What difference does it make to any one whether the article he uses is made in England or America? And if he fancies it does, let him please his fancy by buying from either place, just as a man here can buy Scotch or English jam. We in England are as proud of your Emerson and Edison as you are of our Herbert Spencer and our Watt. It is our stupid politicians that keep us asunder, nay, that divide each of us into more hostile party camps than nations. Let us strive to break loose from their cords and receive the whole world into our community, which, as our language spreads, should embrace the world. The idea of great America being afraid of English goods or England of American productions is childish. We propose to fight government under the banner of Free Trade and feel sure of your hearty coöperation. The old Manchester school was on the right lines, and, pushed to its legitimate conclusion, would have abolished government by gradually and peacefully taking over all its functions; but after the death of Cobden the movement got into the hands of Bright and Gladstone, who stopped it. We should have no land question now if Cobden's advice had been followed and free trade in land granted, no currency and capital questions with free trade in them, no labor question with free trade in labor, that is, without trade unions, which are nothing but a government. No drink question with free trade in drink. Free Trade, in fact, is the settlement of every social question. This is a way of putting the matter that every one can understand, and applies from red herrings to religion, art, science, literature, learning: the one condition of progress and prosperity is free trade in it. It is difficult to get people to understand Anarchy or Individualism, but free trade they do understand, and they are the same thing. So let us talk about and advocate free trade. We are bringing out a paper under the title "Free Trade the Solution of Every Social Question" and would like to see you do the same in America; but perhaps Liberty is a more well [illegible]ood term with you, and the important point is that w[illegible]he same side.

We see hopeful signs that the tide of popular [illegible]is turning against government. Let us try to guide [illegible]e way of perfect freedom, in which alone there is p[illegible]

Yours with grateful esteem, H. W. FAWCUS.

81 CLAPHAM ROAD, LONDON, S. W., JAN. 18, 1892.

Heroic Self-Devotion.

[Gen. Trumbull in Open Court.]

Self-sacrifice in the public service is the highest form of political duty, and, when fully developed, it glows with patriotic fire. While that form of benevolence is more active in the United States than elsewhere, it is not altogether absent from the philanthropic spirit of England, France, and Germany. A republican paper which gives me daily "pointers" on American politics presents me with this heroic specimen of civic self-devotion: "Mr. Blaine is not in any sense a candidate for President, but should he be nominated at Minneapolis he is patriotic enough to accept the office. He cares nothing for the Presidency, but he will take it as a matter of public duty." I regard that as a very high type of chivalry, the sacrifice of self upon the altar of the country. The work may be heavy and the wages light, but when duty requires a man to be President of the United States, why, President he must be. France at this moment presents a parallel example of self-devotion in the person of the Count of Paris. Some alarm had been created among the royalists by a report that Paris had renounced his claim to the throne of France, but the Count of Houssonville, a royalist partisan, denies the story, and shows that it is impossible to be true. "There can be no question," says Houssonville, "of renunciation or of abdication. A right may be abdicated but not a duty. The ties of duty bind the Count of Paris, and will never permit him to abandon the cause which is less his own than that of the nation." That sentiment is fine, and worthy of the Count of Paris, who considers it his patriotic duty to be King of France, and believes that his personal objection to the office ought not to stand in the way of a nation's happiness.

WORLD-CITIZENSHIP.

Translated from the German by Harry Lyman Koopman.

Yea, greater is the heart, the soul is freer,
The mind is nobler and the word profounder,
That, girt by ruffian jubilee's frippery gear,
Stands forth, the highest freedom's bold expounder!

Love the whole earth! Love not a single land
Because, by chance, "thy country" it is called.
A land is never free. Dost kiss the hand
Which into fetters thrust thee, and enthralled?

Oh! break these bonds of narrowness and night.
A scoundrel, he that spake: This land for me!
Curse him that scanted thee and me the right
Men and citizens of this world to be!

John Sturgis Mackay.

Liberty.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which weary Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

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Important Notice.

The editor of Liberty, being about to move to New York, is compelled to temporarily suspend the publication of the paper. It will reappear either in Boston or in New York probably not later than Saturday, April 16, and possibly earlier.

Egoism or Self-Sacrifice?*

The Individualist torch of "Today" flickers in the gust of sentiment as one throws open the door of the idol's temple, whereas it has mostly burned to illuminate with the steady light requisite for analysis.

In a criticism of Spencerian doctrine, on a point illustrating Egoism, I wrote: "If the welfare of others is subserved only as subserving my welfare, it can never be true that I must subordinate my preservation to that of others;" for non-preservation would frustrate future welfare; and I expressed the view that there is no apparent way to account consistently and clearly for Spencer's simultaneously making of the species nothing but a utility for the individual and making the preservation of the species take precedence of that of the individual "in order of obligation," — without some change of point of view.

I more particularly criticised Spencer's middle link of alleged reason why (that the disappearance of the species would include the disappearance of the individual), and I may now add that it seems wholly inconsistent with his placing the individual in contradistinction to the species, which relation implies mutual exclusion. I may also add that much action having some tendency to help or hurt large numbers of the species has to be examined before we can know whether or not it will involve harm, and what harm, to a given individual. May I not presume that the alleged "obligation" to serve the species will operate nevertheless when somewhat less than every living soul of the species is involved?

"Today" accepts Spencer's utterances, but throws little light on them. It speaks of "the principle which holds of creatures leading solitary lives" and adds that this receives qualification in the case of gregarious creatures. Does "Today" think that, when Spencer wrote "the *welfare of the species* is to be subserved only as subserving the welfare of individuals," he was speaking only of "creatures leading solitary lives"? As for the "qualification" in the case of gregarious creatures, "Today" is excusable for its supposition regarding my lack of understanding, but it shall have an opportunity of seeing preceding articles of my series in the publication entitled "Egoism," in which has been illustrated more than a "qualification" of the original and safe principle. There is visible evidence on every hand of lapses from sound reason through the stealthy influence of ideas becoming fixed and dominant. That which is at first a means becomes an end, the sense of proportion being overthrown, and we have irrational action. Whether "society," or an alluring person, or a phantom of enormous wealth, or a mere hobby be the object, there is the like tendency to an *overthrow* of rational individual self-control.

"Today" says that I ignore "the facts generalized." I do not wish to ignore them. I do not ignore the fact that enthusiasts sometimes count themselves out for non-preservation. Some of them prefer to preserve a creed, or national honor, or reverence for an emperor, rather than their own life. I have assisted to generalize many such facts. The bipeds whose conduct furnishes the facts of a virtual insanity are not representative of adherence to individuality, but while language remains what it is, "Today" can term them "Egos." I speak for myself and am permitted in this to represent other facts, — some of us think of later evolution and of surviving power, — when I declare that "when I am counted out for non-preservation, for the good of others, it must be the others, not I, who do the counting out."

"Today" objects that I have assumed: "all conditions of benefit imply at least preservation," and this assumption will not do. The trouble is, I haven't Mr. Spencer's elegant knack of ringing in a phrase, — "it is manifest"; "almost self-evident"; "there emerges the general conclusion," etc.; but, as a slight compensation, perhaps, my simple compositions are comparatively free from the array of question-begging sign-posts. People can take me to task. You cannot do so with a writer who is careful enough not to be quite sure of anything. Of course I was wrong if the words "all conditions of benefit" mean no more than all benefits. All benefits do not imply preservation, for I remember reading that on the battle-field one officer gave another the merciful pistol shot which ended his suffering. I thank "Today" for the suggested correction, but it will have a poor opinion, I fear, of an Egoist's gratitude as I proceed to make use of it. A valuable discovery, this! Decidedly, some conditions, *not* of personal benefit, — unhappy conditions, — demand non-preservation. Hence suicide; the Carthaginians throw themselves into the flames; the young brave rushes to hopeless battle under the shame of disaster. Life is too painful for voluntary continuance. If "Today" had not corrected(?) me in this minor premise, it might have claimed a great many self-sacrificing acts as being altruistic or even Altruistic, which acts now must seem doubtful of classification because we have not the facts of personal consciousness which immediately preceded them, and, for all that we know, the self-sacrificing individual was suffering a pain that drove him frantic, while spectators thought, judging merely by appearances, and not knowing the bottom facts, that he was doing a high, heroic act.

It is curious in several aspects that "Today" should seek to set aside my minor premise. The major, by Spencer, is a conclusive enunciation, and it is not apparent what connected use "Today" could make of the setting aside but to immediately enlarge its recognition of some facts of surrender as being possibly Egoic, whereas "Today" had before assumed otherwise; and finally, on this score, the logic, whatever it ought to be, may apply to the species. Suppose Spencer had said that all conditions of benefit to the species presuppose at least its preservation, would he not have been given credit for meaning something that need neither be disputed nor confounded with the equally clear proposition that some conditions are conceivable in which existence is not a benefit; and in which therefore the destruction of a species is the only benefit remaining for it to receive?

I do not know what "Today" intends by its phrase "in the sense intended by the writer." The closely analytical minds of the editors of "Today" should note the collocation of words for the sense intended.

I submit that Spencer's argument is stated so as to imply no exceptions; in effect: (1) A is a convenience to B; but (2) B is included in A; therefore the preservation of A stands first for B. Now one fallacy may arise as to the mode of inclusion. Spencer is included in the British nation, but Spencer's existence does not depend upon the continued existence of the British nation. Again, in the "preservation of A," to avoid the fallacy we must adhere to all A, or at least to as much of A as includes B, — not resort to other some A. But A includes B, hence the elimination of B cannot be logically contemplated as a means of preserving all A. When a hen fights to the death for her chickens, does she fight on the supposition that all her species, including her own life, is threatened? I do not deny that she may do so, neither do I deny that her whole species is perhaps exposed to a danger. That is a question to be determined when we know whether or not the enemy would attack hens as well as chickens. I suggest that the hen may act under the influence of fallacious reasoning, and I would suggest the same thing of Spencer if he were giving indications of sacrificing himself for the British nation or for the human species, bearing his major premise in my mind. In order to overthrow his argument it is only necessary to establish a logical exception. I might have maintained simply that some benefits outweigh for the individual the consideration of preserving the species. Prospective benefits, as "Today" remarks, cannot be attained if life is surrendered, and medical ethics, for example, permits the sacrifice of the unborn child for the preservation of the mother, not merely in the cases of young mothers, but also in the cases of women who are not likely to be mothers again. (Surgeons are paid by the individual, not by the community.)

But my former writing was for the purpose of elucidating and establishing the Egoistic position, not for the purpose of merely gaining admissions of exceptions to the claims of Altruism, of which there is a strong flavoring added to facts with such phrases as "the order of obligation," and "*is to be* preferred." I have frankly admitted that "society" ought to prefer its own welfare to that of the individual if it is certain that they differ, as well as the individual ought to prefer his own welfare to all other things. Not many weeks ago "Today" followed closely what I had written on the force of this word "ought." Its illustration was so amusingly similar to the one which I had already put in print that I really believe "Today" had not seen my article in which that matter occurred.

As we agree in the use of this term, and as I find "Today" in the main not Altruistic (crazy), but only in a good sense altruistic with an altruism reducible by a rigid analysis to Egoism; and as I hold intelligent Egoism to be incidentally in effect the truest altruism, I now use this word "ought" without fear of being misunderstood by "Today."

What does enthusiasm prove? That the crusader was more highly evolved than the rationalist? In one way, yes. Simply a fact. Nothing to cause evolution-worship in any thinking mind. Is not the political State, as we see it, vastly evolved? Are not its pretences largely related to altruism? On what ground do evolutionary Anarchists combat it? They are sometimes reminded that primitive barbarians have no State government and told by State Socialists that Anarchism appears to be an atavism. That seems to be the way in which "Today" treats philosophic Egoism, as I understand it, — a much mistaken way, I apprehend, for editors whose efforts are cheerfully directed to promote Individualism. Their own logic is on the road to Egoism. Their aim in politics is less sentiment, less self-sacrifice, a better balance of interests by their autonomy; but they do not understand that Egoism means all this in politics and as much in morals. "Today" has admitted Anarchism's claims as to the ultimate state of politics, not allowing itself to be radically misled by the appearance of

*The article in "Today" to which this is a reply is reprinted in another column.

involution, but seizing upon the fact of the evolution of the individual in politics. Probably it has not given equal study to Egoism, but, like others, has thought that the line of demarcation was of course drawn by us where the herd of preachers draw it. I never felt more Egoistic in getting something of the outside world *for* myself than I have always felt in spontaneously delivering something *of* myself to the outside world. The gist of our idea is not *I against you*, but I, and so you, *unawed*, — men conscious each one of his selfhood, — sovereign. This is the *Anarchy of morals*, subject to the same current misunderstanding as political Anarchy.

From an Egoistic point of view self-subordination, it will be readily perceived, is either a compliance with conditions, in which case it extends only as far as they dictate the necessity, or it is a fact of irrational conduct.

I am quite content to let "family" stand as a "convenient term," — for an inconvenient arrangement. "Today" must be of very penetrating eye to see that the parent is "not the slave of his offspring," and yet that the parents "count themselves out, subordinate their welfare to the welfare of the family." "Today" is not required to define its terms or prove the compatibility of the two statements. If the parents are happy in doing as they do on their own premises, that should suit others passably well. If they are not happy, but go and sacrifice themselves, — I must procure a definition of the word "slave" before accepting "Today's" assurance without reserve. This is a touchy subject. The editors of "Today" are evidently devoted family men, and they have strong public sentiment with them. There are said to be some parents who are common slaves, and some who are willing slaves, but I am prepared to believe that it is possible to be a parent without being a slave, and on the other hand I think I have seen both men and women practically slaves in the marital relationship while not parents.

But I do not wish to be metaphysical. "Today" will excuse me. I should not know a metaphysician from any other kind of a physician if I met him in the street.

Whoever fails to distinguish between a mechanical principle and the engines which exhibit its operation may conceivably declare the principle annihilated when one or more of the engines are stopped by special friction. Such a person might assert that Egoism is knocked out because women must have babies and husbands must sit up at night to administer soothing syrup.

Tak Kak.

Society vs. Egoism.

[Today.]

A writer who calls himself an "Egoistic Anarchist," and who professes to adhere to the law of equal freedom, criticises Herbert Spencer's statement that, "postulating the desirability of the preservation and prosperity of the given species, there emerges the general conclusion that in order of obligation the preservation of the species takes precedence of the preservation of the individual." In this, he avers, there are "several features of sophistry." He recalls Mr. Spencer's admission that "the species has no existence save as an aggregate of individuals, and hence the welfare of the species is an end to be subserved only as subserving the welfare of individuals," and asserts that, "if the welfare of others is subserved only as subserving my welfare, it can never be true that I must subordinate my preservation to that of others, for this is to use the general rule, which applies while I am one of the crowd [species], to the exceptional case wherein I am set apart from the crowd." The term *species* the writer regards as inconvenient and prefers to lay it aside. Then, in restating Mr. Spencer's proposition, he finds it necessary to speak either of all the individuals concerned except one, or of all the individuals concerned, without exception. The charge against Mr. Spencer is that he has seemingly used the term species in both senses. "In the first premise [the welfare of the species is an end to be subserved only as subserving the welfare of individuals] Spencer speaks for the individual treating the crowd from his proper motive; but in the conclusion he speaks for the crowd or some of its preserved part contemplating the sacrifice of an individual." The writer adds that, since "all conditions of benefit imply at least preservation," the ego can never count himself out. "When I am counted out for non-preservation, for the good of others, it must be the others, not I, who do the counting out."

All this has undoubtedly a plausible look, but on closer inspection it turns out to be an idle quibble. The writer deliberately ignores the *facts* generalized, and merely juggles with the words used. Note how he attempts to overthrow the Spencerian representation by a syllogism of his own, and carefully examine his premises. He takes for his major premise Mr. Spencer's proposition that the welfare of the species is an end to be subserved only as subserving the welfare of individuals, and then, without any evidence or proof, asks us to accept his minor premise that all conditions of benefit imply at least preservation! But suppose we deny this proposition; what becomes of the conclusion that, when one man is counted out, it must be the others, not he, who does the counting out? It is plain that no conclusion is safe against such a method of argumentation. Allow a man to introduce a proposition without reference to truth or fact, and he will be master of all he surveys. Absolve a man from demonstrating his premises, and any conclusion will be made to order. The writer cannot be permitted to proceed until he proves that all conditions of benefit imply at least preservation. Will it be said that this is too obvious to require demonstration? In one sense, it certainly is. All benefits, and all possibility of them, close when life is surrendered. But in the sense intended by the writer it is far from obvious, and we must wait for proof of the assertion that the ego never counts himself out, never voluntarily subordinates himself to the preservation of the aggregate, but insists on being allowed to live and derive benefits. Such proof will never be offered, for only the facts of life and evolution are admissible as evidence, and these sustain Spencer and leave his critic nothing but metaphysical quibbles. As members of society men *do* spontaneously count themselves out and subordinate their own preservation to the preservation of the society. This fact is as fundamental and as important as the fact that primarily creatures are subject only to the effects of their own nature and consequent conduct. The principle which holds of creatures leading solitary lives is the principle contended for by this Spencerian critic, who does not seem to understand that the original, simple, and primary principle receives qualification in the case of gregarious creatures. To ignore either of the qualifications would be as fatal to any system of ethics as to ignore the primary law. A system based on some of the facts is as worthless as one evolved of one's inner consciousness.

Self-subordination is a law even for those leading solitary lives. The rearing of offspring necessitates self-subordination, and hence family life entails the first qualification of the primary principle of each according to his nature and conduct. Yet a parent is not the slave of his offspring; and of the family, as of the society, it is perfectly proper to say that has no existence save as the aggregate of the individuals composing it, and that its welfare is to be subserved only as subserving the welfare of the individuals. "Family" is only a convenient term, and our metaphysical writer might well be puzzled by the curious fact that, while the family includes the parents as well as the offspring, the parents count themselves out, subordinate their welfare to the welfare of the family! A study of the facts of sub-human and human life shows that, if fault is to be found, we must demur not to the syllogism, but to the conditions of existence and the evolution of character. We may quarrel with the ego and adduce metaphysical reasons why he ought not to count himself out, but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that he does count himself out. The question of compulsion exercised by the crowd upon unwilling individuals is irrelevant. Under any possible state of society, the defence of the society against foes would be undertaken cheerfully and voluntarily by large numbers of young and strong males. These defenders of the society would count themselves out for non-preservation, and would sacrifice themselve to secure the prosperity of the old, the very young, the females, and those who must be left at home to provide for the needs of all. Those who count themselves out belong, of course, to the society, yet they will declare that they fight for the preservation of the society — meaning the part left at home. Metaphysicians are naturally attracted by the verbal paradox, while evolutionists inquire into the nature of the principles which secure social progress and the conditions which modify the simple and universal laws operating under primitive forms of existence.

Mr. Spencer takes cognizance of all the facts; he studies the individual and observes the changes in his feelings and ideas which correspond to the changes in the conditions of his existence. He exposes the operating principles and their *rationale* and he points out the inevitable inferences from the facts observed. He simply interprets our own experiences and directs our attention to certain sequences. Some metaphysicians prefer to fashion a system of politics or ethics out of nothing and to scold men into adopting their vagaries. In this sort of madness there is some method; but there is no method in the madness of the man who professes to abide by the law of equal freedom while repudiating the very elements which make it applicable in the given case.

The Story of a Russian Peasant.

[Novoye Vremya.]

Grandpa Ivan is dead. He was lying behind the oven, dressed in a rough linen shirt and covered with his sheepskin cloak. It was quite dark in the corner; the smoky, flickering light of the pine link which lighted the room did not reach there. The crackling of the burning pine and the voice of a cricket in the wall were the only sounds in the room.

By the burning pine link sat Axenia, Ivan's daughter-in-law, and her daughter Froshka, sewing a long white shirt. At the other end of the room hung a cradle, in which Fedya, Froshka's boy, slept. When the child moved, the young mother rocked him by means of a board which, in the form of a lever, was attached to the cradle. With one end under her foot, like a treadle, she could rock her boy without being disturbed in her work.

The heavy sighs or hoarse groans which Ivan had uttered were caused merely by the mechanical action of his dissolving frame. As to himself, if he were conscious at all, he felt quite comfortable. He did not feel anything and did not think of anything. Scenes of his past, dimly conceived, swayed before his imagination. Of such conceptions consisted his life. They were, indeed, the make-up of his whole, uneventful, laborious, and patient living on earth.

Seventy-five years ago a young woman, Malanya Boobnikha, was mowing rye in the field on a hot day in July. She had been unwell in the morning, but her mother-in-law had chased her out to work. At noontime Malanya could no longer swing the scythe; her head was dizzy, rings of red fire played around her eyes, she had a keen pain in her bones. She dropped her scythe and crept away to look for some water. Old Varvara, a neighbor, met her.

"What ails thee, Boobnikha?" she asked. "Thy face looks not like thine own."

"I am broken down, Varvara."

"Thou should'st not have gone to work. Come, I will assist thee."

Malanya made no rejoinder; she could not speak. The woman led her to the village. But she could not walk far, and lay down at the roadside to draw breath. Half an hour later she gave birth to a strong, healthy boy. Her husband came with a cart and took her home. On the Sunday following, the new-born boy was christened Ivan. Six days later Malanya was at work in the fields again, with her child in a basket tied to her shoulders.

The first five years of Ivan's life left no traces in his memory. He had a deformed leg, and the people in the village said that his father, coming home drunk, had thrown him out of the cradle and broken his leg. But Ivan never troubled himself about his deformity. If anything, the crooked limb was a favor to him, for it saved him from military service. He had strong arms, and he could work like any other peasant. For the rest he did not care.

At the age of nine Ivan was sent to the Diakon to learn his letters. He got more blows than learning from the teacher, but he learned to read and write. When he was eleven years old his father decided that he ought to eat bread no longer in idleness, and he was hired out as a shepherd boy to a wealthy farmer in the neighborhood. His master fed and clothed him and paid to his father three roubles in cash and three bushels of rye every year. The little fellow was happy. In the warm seasons of the year he could enjoy himself to his heart's content in the meadows and the woods, in which were plenty of berries, mushrooms, nuts, birds' nests, hares, and squirrels. What more does a peasant boy want? That happiness, however, was of short duration. It lasted only three years. His older brother, Mikolka, was sent to the army and he was taken home to fill his place.

From that time the real life of a peasant began for Ivan. His father was a drunkard, his younger brother was sickly, the care of the entire household was laid upon him. At the dawn of the morning he went to work; at dinner time he ate a frugal meal of bread soaked in kvass, and rested himself for a half hour, and then he went to work again until late in the evening. There was neither rest nor recreation for him even on the holidays, for his father spent such days in the barroom, and he had to do what the peasants call the light work around the house — chop wood, repair the cart and the harness, plaster the holes in the chimney, repair the leakage in the roof, and so on. He had to work hard all the time, out of necessity and out of fear, for his father, who had lost his reason in drink, was of a very ugly disposition and used his fist and his whip on the slightest provocation.

When Ivan was eighteen years old his parents decided that it was time for him to marry. They selected for him a girl from the neighboring village. Her name was Matrena. The girl had a speckled face, and a cataract on her left eye. She also had a bad reputation, because she was too condescending to the young fellows of her own village. Ivan did not like her and told his parents that he would not marry her; but his father insisted in his own ugly way. Matrena was a strong woman and a good worker. The summer was near at hand, when a strong, hard-working woman might be of great assistance in the household. Ivan's mother was growing too weak to do much work in the field. As to the ill-favored appearance of the girl, the Russian adage says, "The face is not a glass to drink water from." In that wise Ivan's father reasoned about the match and gave effect to his reasoning with many hard blows. Ivan had to submit.

All the peasants of both Ivan's and Matrena's villages took part in the marriage celebration. There was plenty of brandy at the repast. Ivan got drunk for the first time in

his life, and gave his bride a good beating then and there. There was nothing unusual in that. The guests even approved of his conduct, because he manifested the authority of a husband on the very day of his wedding. The bride cried a little, but that did not prevent her taking part in the next dance. After the marriage the young couple had a vacation of three days, the customary honeymoon of the peasants, and then they went to work as usual in the field and about the little farm of Ivan's father. Ivan had the notion that a peasant must beat his wife and get drunk on a holiday. He followed the example of his father, whose companion he was at the barroom. He and his father got drunk on the holidays and beat their wives when they came home. The two women cried when they were chastised, but everything was forgotten the next day when all had to go to work again.

The summer was hardly over when Ivan's elder brother, Mikolka, came home, having been dismissed from the army for some reason unknown. The unexpected increase in the family was too great a tax on the means of livelihood on hand. It was, therefore, resolved that one of the three brothers should hire out to work. Which should it be? Mikolka, as the eldest son, had the right to take his father's place at the family hearth. The youngest son, Stepka, was not strong, and could not do well as a hired laborer. By a majority of voices in the family council it was decided that Ivan must leave the house. And Ivan went away, far, far to the coast of "Little Mother Volga" to work as a "boorlak," a barge puller.

The life of a boorlak is well known; he is hitched to the line of the barge, which he pulls from early morning until late in the evening. Many, many times did Ivan walk up and down by the shore of the Volga, with the line on his shoulder, pulling the huge barge, together with twenty other boorlaks. In the heat of the summer and in the chills of the spring and the autumn, ankle deep in the dry sand or knee deep in the mud, in the parching rays of the July sun or in the pouring rain of September, they pulled their barge at an even gait, singing the slow, sad boorlak songs. At noon their employer would order a halt and give them time to eat dinner and rest for about an hour. But, exhausted with his hard, slow, monotonous work, his shoulders and spine sore from the pressure and friction of the line, the boorlak hardly cares for his dinner: he falls asleep with the morsel in his mouth. The dinner hour passes almost unnoticed. The barge owner calls, and, taking the line again upon his sore shoulders, the boorlak tugs his barge until dark.

In the winter Ivan worked in a lumber mill on the Kama. Here the work was easier, but the wages were small. The owner of the mill was a "koolak," a close-fisted extortionist. Paying the smallest wages, he insisted that his laborers should buy their provisions at his stores. He charged them for their tobacco, shoes, and other articles of necessity three times as much as they were worth. When the working season was over, the balance in their favor was very small. Still, adding the little which he received at the mill to that which he had saved from his wages on the Volga, Ivan managed to send home twenty roubles every year. For six years Ivan worked in that manner. He received no news from home; but that did not worry him. While tugging the barge or working the buzz saw in a lumber mill a man has no time to think of home.

One day he received, with a passport, a letter informing him that he was wanted at home. That happened in the winter, when he was working in the lumber mill. He told his employer that he must leave. That made the koolak so angry that he curtailed his account in a most shameful manner. Ivan had to make his way home, about six hundred versts, on foot and almost without money. Half begging and half starving, he trudged on until he came back to his native village. Great changes had occurred at his home during his absence. His father had died and his senior brother Mikolka had been transported to Siberia for horse stealing. His greatest surprise was to find that his wife was a mother of three children, two boys and a girl. But that did not trouble him. "To keep up a respectable appearance" he gave his wife a beating, but at heart he was glad to be a father of two healthy boys. From the day he arrived Ivan was the recognized head of the household, which consisted of himself, his wife, and three children, his younger brother and wife, and two unmarried sisters. There were mouths enough to feed and there was work enough to do, and Ivan was the only good laborer in the house. His younger brother could not do much because he had a disabled arm. Ivan settled down to work for his household.

In 1861 serfdom was abolished. The twenty-six peasants of the village of Poostovka, of whom Ivan was one, had no cause to rejoice at their liberation. The manor of their master, who had inherited the village from a distant relative, stood always unoccupied. Their master lived somewhere in a foreign land, and seemed to have forgotten about the village and the serfs that he owned. The serfs were, consequently, not oppressed with socage or quit rents. Although they were told that they were free, they hardly knew what it meant. Government surveyors came and apportioned to them three and a half dessyatins of land for each "feeder." That was less than they had had when their master owned the estate. They, consequently, felt that their liberty had done them more harm than good. They were told, moreover, that, as a community of free men, they had to select a starosta (foreman or alderman) to represent them before the government authorites. They called a meeting for that purpose. Ivan was the only man in the village who "knew letters," and he was unanimously elected to the honorable position. He begged his fellow villagers to let him off, and demonstrated that an old man would be more fit than he to act as "starosta." He even put up a pail of brandy to bribe them that they should elect another man. The brandy was drunk, but his request was not heeded; the community had elected him and he must serve. His principal duty was to collect the government taxes. But his fellow villagers were poor, and could not pay them in full. When the natchalnik (government agent) came in the autumn and the starosta had not the full amount of taxes to deliver, he put him in prison for a month, or still longer, "for the neglect of duty." Ivan served as starosta for nine years, and every year he had to serve a term in prison because he could not collect from his neighbors the full amount of taxes which the government claimed.

In the meantime Ivan's children grew up. His eldest son was taken into the army and lost sight of, leaving a wife and child at home. The second son went to tug the barge on the Volga, as his father had done in his younger days. One daughter married and another, who could not find a match, stayed at home. His only real help was Petro, his second son.

At the age of sixty Ivan's strength gave out. He could work no longer in the field, and he busied himself with the lighter work around the house. His wife died. Five years later he became more feeble and could not attend to the work around the house with the usual energy. His son Petro, who now was the recognized head of the household, came to the conclusion that the old man consumed bread for nothing and must get out of the house. Fortunately the rector of the parish required a man to take care of his beehives. Ivan was able to attend to that, and he was employed. Grandpa Ivan, as he was called, felt good as a beekeeper. He could stretch himself and warm his old emaciated frame in the bright summer day. He could inhale the fragrance of the woods and meadows and listen to the chirping of the birds and the humming of the bees. But his happiness lasted only five years. He grew too feeble to attend even to the beehives, and the parson sent him home. One year later his eyes grew dim; he could hardly see a thing.

From that time his life was spent between his bed behind the oven and the little wooden stool at the door of his hut. In the morning, when the weather was clear, he felt his way to the door, sat on his little bench, and inhaled the fresh air. When tired of sitting outside he felt his way back to his couch behind the oven. He was tolerated with ill grace by his son, who often told him unreservedly, "I wish thou wert dead. How long will thee continue eating bread for nothing, old devil?" Very little bread did Grandpa Ivan eat, not even a pound a day, which he soaked in water, but even that morsel was begrudged him.

During the last week of his life Ivan was in his corner. He did not eat anything, but he felt rather good — restful. In the evening, when Petro came home, he stepped up to the couch and pulled off the coverlet to see whether the old man was alive. Ivan uttered a groan of recognition. "No, he is not dead yet," the son would say. "He does not want to die, the old devil!" and he sat down to his supper with an air of disappointment. Ivan passed away quietly. Neither his daughter-in-law, Axenia, nor his granddaughter, Froshka, knew that he was dead. They sat in the dingy hut doing their needlework by the light of the pine link. Nor did Ivan himself know that his life ceased. The same motionless thought which was in him while he lived hovered over his old bones. The door opened, and Petro entered. The red, smoky flame of the pine link flickered in the stream of fresh air from the opened door.

"Is grandpa still living?" Petro asked, and stepped up to the old man's couch. He pulled the coverlet — no groan of recognition. He shook the old man — no sign of life. That time his father did not disappoint him; he was dead, indeed.

"Well, women," Petro said coolly, "he is dead. Tomorrow we will bury him. We must call the parson."

The women began crying aloud. The child in the cradle woke up and cried also. The mother took him to her breast and fed him. He fed greedily; he wanted to live. He knew not that, like his Great-Grandpa Ivan, like his Grandfather Petro, and like his own father, now a young man of about twenty years, he must labor all his life and die at last as one who "eats bread for nothing."

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